

LUTHERAN WOMAN TODAY

JANUARY
1989

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SPIRITUALITY: SPACE & TIME

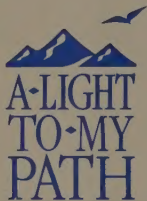
For Growth in Faith and Mission

1989
JANUARY 1989

LUTHERAN WOMAN TODAY

VOLUME
NO

FEATURES



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Carol Frances Jegen

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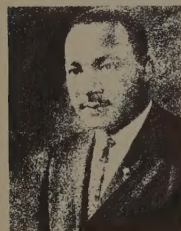
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Calendar, Preview

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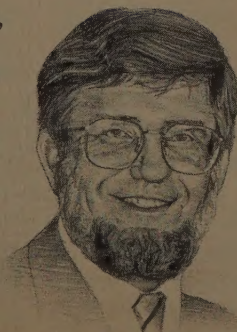
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LETTERS

Thanks

Hurrah! After having carried around the January "Selfcare" article for months because it meshes with my concerns and interests, I finally realized that the [column] is featured monthly. I've been so busy sharing health information that I hadn't had the time to read all of the later issues.

Now I call the articles to everyone's attention at our circle Bible studies so that no one misses the excellent information.

*Pearl Quinnild
Barnesville, MN*

Marilyn Olson's "Letter to My Mother" in the September issue was beautifully written as well as highly inspirational. I have read and reread it many times, and intend to keep doing so because it has been so meaningful to me.

*Margaret Houk
Appleton, WI*

When my wife began receiving [LWT] she would read some of it to me because since it was a woman's magazine I didn't notice it much.

But, I'm retired, and one day after vacuuming I sat down and picked up the magazine and was surprised at how much I enjoyed it.

Now I read it first and point out articles to my wife. It helps us both in more ways than one and we wanted to let you know it.

*Bob and Ruby Lewis
Hixson, TN*

No Thanks

[We] would like to air several complaints about [LWT]. After a year of receiving it, the magazine still a stranger to us. We do not see any familiar authors, editors or contributors. We miss the "home" feeling.

We in Wyoming, Montana, and the two Dakotas are of the rural, Northern European heritage, with extremely few minorities. The majority of us don't know what inner cities are really like. We are not of a cosmopolitan nature and find it difficult to relate to the magazine's overemphasis on East Coast issues.

We realize the need to be informed and to be aware of global needs and events, and yet we certainly need some of our own culture left intact. Too many times your articles have little or no meaning to us. (This may be the exact thing that your minorities are saying.)

We miss reading articles that immediately fit into our lives . . . don't care for all the "self-help" articles in the magazine. Let's start relying on God's help more, please.

*Women of Hope Lutheran
Church*

*Donna Brandon, Secretary
Powell, WY*

■ Address comments to Letters, Lutheran Woman Today, 8765 Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631



SPACE & TIME FOR THE SPIRIT

Carol Frances Jegen, BVM

As I introduce this first article in a four-part series on spirituality, some preliminary comments are in order. First, I want to express my sincerest gratitude for this ecumenical opportunity to dialog with my Lutheran sisters in Christ. A year ago at a Lutheran Deacon-Association retreat, I mentioned to my dear Lutheran grandmother that it was my first prayer. At a very young age I was introduced to the language of ecumenical dialog, and the hopes of the ecumenical movement. Now, as a Catholic sister in

the post-Vatican II church, I treasure this new opportunity to grow in understanding and love of our common Christian heritage, our life in the Spirit of the risen Jesus.

Spirituality is quite a popular topic these days. Not only is there a variety of spiritualities in our Christian tradition, but today many Christians are attuned also to other spiritualities, such as those of the East and those of Native Americans. Perhaps our preoccupations with technological advances are largely responsible for awakening in all people of faith a new awareness of our hunger and thirst for things of the spirit.

Cooperating with the Holy Spirit

For you and me as Christian women, this renewed emphasis on spirituality means a new responding to the Holy Spirit. Spirituality can be described as “the way we cooperate with the movements of the Holy Spirit in our lives.” Christian spirituality can be seen as the way Christians follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit, whom they know is now

the Spirit of Jesus risen. In this four-part series I explore important aspects of spirituality: time and space (this issue), beauty (February), playfulness (March) and concern for the poor and marginalized (April).

Saint Luke's theology of the Holy Spirit, as it is developed in the third gospel and in the book of Acts, can help us see the Spirit of God active in the lives of the earliest Christian communities and in the life of Jesus. In his writing, Luke uses a kind of parallelism to show how the Spirit's actions nurture a spirituality shared by Jesus and his followers.

For example, Mary's openness to the Holy Spirit in the annunciation (Luke 1:26-38), is mirrored in the Pentecost community's acceptance of that same Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). Also, Luke's threefold portrayal of the Spirit's empowering in Jesus' life—at his baptism, in the desert struggle and in his experience in the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 3:21 and

**“Spirituality
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following; 4:1 and following; 4:1 and following) has enabled Christians of all ages to understand something about the Spirit's movements in their own lives.

For one thing, we come to see how important it is to understand that the Holy Spirit is given freely—as a gift that enables us to enter into a life of prayerful intimacy with God, a life of genuine friendship. The Holy

Spirit continually nurtures a value system in believers, a system often at odds with the values of the prevailing culture. As we know from Jesus' own temptations in the desert, the Spirit of God will help us struggle against those life-styles which flourish such evils as rampant materialism, consumerism, sensationalism, and dominating, manipulative uses of power.

The Anointed One

In the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus chose a text from Isaiah to highlight the spirituality of one who is anointed—that is, one who is touched deeply by God's own Spirit. That person, that “anointed one,” would “bring good news to the poor . . . proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18, Revised Standard Version). Such deeds of compassionate love were the hallmarks of Jesus' own

quality, and they continue to be signs by which Jesus' followers recognized.

Women and the Holy Spirit

Our Christian tradition, studies probe into the mystery of God's Spirit have resulted in some considerations of the Holy Spirit as an eminence expression of the inner life of our trinitarian God. These considerations obviously can have some special meaning for us as we grow in a spirituality that is authentically Christian. Our experience can help us appreciate implications of the Spirit's own life: the active receptivity, the openness, and the unifying actions that mark the Spirit of Love.

When we look at the Holy Spirit's action in the created universe, we see action as preparing an atmosphere, or situation of love, so that the word—especially the Incarnate Word, Jesus—can be heard and shared. Once again, women can relate with such action of the Spirit, for women, too, like the Spirit, had a great deal of creative energy and time in creating loving atmospheres, and situations of love, such as fostering wholesome environments in homes, neighborhoods, offices, parishes, hospitals, schools, and in many other places.

Countless women make spaces where the word of love can be expressed and enjoyed. Stop a moment and think of women you know in your life, or in your experience, who have created wholesome spaces for love to be shared and grow.

Renewals

A common prayer reads, "Come, Holy Spirit, renew the face of the earth." Theologically speaking, this prayer borrows words from the crea-

tion account of Genesis and thereby reminds us of that first creation, when God's own Spirit moved over the waters of chaos and began to make space for the sun and the stars, the land and the seas, the birds and the fish, the trees and the flowers. God created beautiful spaces on earth for the human family to be at home. And then God rested. God took time to rest and enjoy the goodness of creation.

Space and Time

This first creation account pictures God's Spirit involved in space and time. Likewise now, a renewed creation—so urgently needed in our times—calls for new spaces and times, first and foremost in the lives of those called to follow Jesus intimately with a spirituality that is truly life-giving.

"Making space and time for God" is one way in which we might describe prayer, the heart of any spirituality. In a culture as frantically busy and noise-filled as ours, space and time with God, and for God, is a challenge of the first order.

Each of us who is serious about a spiritual life simply must find ways to make space, and to make time, "just for God." Of course, there are no set patterns, no perfect times and no ideal spaces. Most basically our space needs to be inner space. However, a quiet corner somewhere can help us create that inner space of quiet wherein we can listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Words need not be spoken. What is essential is a quiet awareness of God's love for us at this moment of our lives.

Moments of Prayerfulness

Large spaces and long times for prayer may not be possible for most of us on most days. But small spaces

and short times can be found—and they can be just as energizing! The challenge for each of us, in our busy lives, is to discover where those small spaces and times might be, then claim them for our own spiritual nourishment. Is yours while your child naps and you've taken the phone off the hook? Is yours in bed as you begin or end the day? Is yours while you walk or jog for your morning exercise?

In these small moments of prayer-

fulness, we can become cocreator with renewed energy and purpose. In these moments of prayerfulness the Holy Spirit will be renewing the face of the earth through us. And we shall consider in next month's article, the Holy Spirit's renewing action is always beautiful—often in some surprising ways.

It's time for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Let us make room for Jesus' own Spirit in our lives—this week, this day, now.



Come Away By Yourself

Lois N. Erickson

Near Barcelona, Spain, the Shrine of the *Virgin Negra*, the "Dark Madonna," draws many tourists. After leaving the ornate interior of the sanctuary, I asked a monk, "What are all the other buildings?"

"This is a place of meditation," he

told me. "Anyone can come and in a private room for a retreat. I pointed to paths that led into rugged, rocky hills. 'Here you wander into lonely places to pray and meditate.'"

My tourist schedule allowed n

to stay, but always I hoped to. Finally I realized there must be a retreat center closer to home. I discovered that Mount St. Benedict Abbey, a Benedictine monastery a few miles from where I live in Oregon, has a large guesthouse. The rule of St. Benedict is, "Let all that come be received like Christ himself." This hospitality includes, of course, a Lutheran.

I called to ask about a reservation, and the retreat master assured me that space was available.

At the abbey my comfortable room overlooked an agricultural valley. In the spring rains had freshly watered the green field. I gazed out the window and wondered how to best use my prayer and meditation.

Catherine de Hueck Doherty's *Poustinia* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1975) she writes about her personal retreat. "You are about to have a rendezvous, a date with Christ. . . . He knows all about you. After a little chat with him, snooze a while, do a little reading, go out and look at the grass and say . . . 'How beautiful you made the grass'. . . . This is the sort of thing you can do." "Come away by yourselves to a quiet place, and rest a while" (Mark 6:31 Revised Standard Version). At times when I've attended too many committee meetings, made more promises than necessary, given an abundance of promises, I recall Jesus' advice to his apostles. I remember that Christ took time out for renewal in the desert.

A few years ago daily cares enveloped me until my perceptive husband said, "Your health is important. Let's go." With his encouragement I packed our VW camper and drove up a mountain pass to a campground in central Oregon. There, on the bank of the Warm Springs

River, I sat under a juniper tree and listened to the meadowlarks sing. Glancing up, I could see the yellow of dwarf sunflowers splashed against brick-red earth, deep-blue lupine nestled among gray-green sagebrush.

The words of Mark 1:35 moved gently through my mind. "Very early the next morning, long before daylight, Jesus got up and left the house. He went out of town to a lonely place, where he prayed" (Today's English Version).

During my week at the campground I read, ate, and occasionally talked with other campers. And I slept. The first night on my retreat I slept from 8:30 P.M. to 8:30 A.M.—long after daylight!

The following night unknown sounds awakened me. Peering out the window of my camper, I saw wild horses. They had invaded the campground to eat grass along the side of the river. In the predawn light I counted six mares, two yearlings, two colts, and a handsome black stallion.

Leaving the comfort of my sleeping bag, I climbed a small hill. With wary glances the stallion watched me while he efficiently herded his family up another hillside. They disappeared into the desert, leaving me in solitude to pray and watch the sun appear over the pungent sagebrush and low-growing herbs.

" . . . the next morning, long before daylight . . ." became my waking meditation. After a few days I felt strong enough to hike into a high mesa. There, with a shy, gray rabbit as my only companion, I ate breakfast from my knapsack.

When I returned home and reported my experiences to a group of young mothers, they reacted: "But I have children at home and I can't go



away." "I wouldn't want to take so much time or stay overnight." Their comments gave me another idea. What about a miniretreat at home?

Any time I make up my mind to do so, I take a four-hour retreat at home. The key in that statement is "make up my mind."

Do I really want to retreat today? I should clean house, bake cookies, go shopping, wash clothes. I find that for me the best time for a miniretreat is Wednesday or Thursday, before an especially busy weekend overtakes me.

Determined to ignore a ringing telephone, I head for the bedroom. Usually I rest for 15 minutes. Then I read my Bible, or a Christian book, or meditate on a Bible verse. I allot some time for exercise—a walk or a bike ride.

After a simple lunch I fill the remaining time with Bible study, prayer, and rest. The four hours pass quickly, leaving me refreshed physically and spiritually.

Since I started retreating, my health has improved. I've also discovered that I can take time to listen to God and find guidance for my daily life.

I've found the following techniques helpful:

- Do not plan ahead what you do. When you feel like praying, pray. When you want to rest, rest. I fall asleep, wake up rejoicing in the new day.

- Keep a notebook handy. Jot down ideas you are learning, changes you wish to make, insights, and thoughts.

- Allow yourself to learn the value of quietness. The person who craves solitude should never fear loneliness. Douglas V. Steere, the Quaker professor of philosophy, wrote in his book *Prayer and Worship* (The Howard W. Hazen Foundation, 1938), "The first condition of prayer is to recognize that solitude is the stronghold of the strong, and to provide for its place in life."

*Lois Erickson recently retired from teaching English as a Second Language to become a free-lance writer. Her book *Adventure in Solitude* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1981) details how to find quiet time.*

Maybe We Still Believe in the Magi's Visit

For definitions of Spanish language terms in this article, see the glossary at the bottom of pages 10 and 11.—ED.

Today's Latin American Celebration of the Three Magi has a long history. It is celebrated everywhere on January 6, but each country has its own particular traditions and folklore. Before describing the customs, let's look at the origin and meaning of the festival.

The word *Epiphany* (sometimes *theophany*) comes from the Greek and it means a showing or manifestation of divinity, or marks important events in the life of a

—such as the ascension to the throne, or naming a city. Paul used the word *epiphany* to describe miracles of Christ as manifestations of his divine power.

In the Orient, Epiphany is known as the *Magi's Visit*. Like Christmas,

Epiphany was probably assigned its date to coordinate with the date of a pagan feast. In Christian history, however, Epiphany is connected with four important events in the life of Christ: the birth of Christ, his baptism, the visit of the Magi, and the miracle at Cana.

Latin America's emphasis on Epiphany comes through Roman liturgy, whose main focus for Epiphany is the Adoration of the Magi. Because children in Latin America enjoy this day so much, let us hear them tell

Epiphany is connected with four important events in the life of Christ: the birth of Christ, his baptism, the visit of the Magi, and the miracle at Cana.

about their feelings and what they do on this important day.

On the day before the *Three Magi*, two girls, Rosita and Margarita, are talking excitedly. The next day is a wonderful one for them and for all the children in *la barriada*.

Rosita: Margarita, what are you going to ask



for from the Three Magi?

Margarita: Oh, Rosita, I still don't know. I want so many things. I would like a bicycle and a kitchen set but I don't know if it is too much for them. Do you think that they can buy all that?

Rosita: Don't worry, Margarita. They will bring these gifts. It is not too much; after all, they brought incense, gold and myrrh to Jesus. You are asking for only two presents. I am asking not only for me but for Daniel and for José. They didn't receive anything last year. They live so far from the entrance to *la barriada* that the Magi can't get to their house. My father told me that this

happens when the Magi can't find the star that was the signal to find Jesus when he was born in Bethlehem.

Margarita: Remember, we have to cut fresh grass to put under the bed, too, for the camels. You know the camels are coming from the desert, and they will be very hungry when they get here. Oh, how will they come into the house?

Rosita: They are Magi, that's why. Remember to wash your face well tonight, because they also will visit you.

Margarita: Are you going to sing carols and *aguinaldos* in the *parranda* or *trullas* tonight? My cousin

G L O S S A R Y

la barriada: A cluster of houses that belongs to a community, usually smaller than a town (also *barrio*).

aguinaldos: A song with traditional melody and one repeated theme.

parranda: A variation of the *posada*; also called *trulla*.

posada: Procession, group of people that goes from house to house.

morena: An ethnic group that is a mix of black and white.

mamá and *papá:* Mother and father.

maracas: Musical instrument made of dried round gourds with pebbles and dried seeds inside.

güiro: A long serrated gourd, scraped with a metal strip.

Mexican told me that they call it *caña*.

ca: How can I go? I have to go early.

garita: I am going to *la parvada*. I promised Miss Rivera, the teacher, that I would be one of the Three Kings. I am supposed to be a king because I am *morena*, and I am Black. I like to sing with *los tres* and *papá* and with the people of the *barrio*.

ca: Now I want to go, too. Let me ask mamá and papá if they are going. When do they start going to the house?

garita: Early. Usually at 6:00. We can go to bed by 8:00. If we are going, we have to pick up the gifts right now.

ca: That sounds great. Let's go.

The next day, the Three Kings—Melchior and Balthazar—came to the home of Margarita and Rosalinda. Many others who truly believe in them. That's the only remnant! Daniel and José didn't have any gifts this year. Maybe they are too old to believe in them! Everyone in the family in every house was awakened early to open the

gifts together. After playing and enjoying the gifts with the children, the whole family visits their grandparents and godparents. They wear their new clothing, and with musical instruments like *maracas*, *quiro*, *cuatro*, or *guitarra*, they sing and dance from house to house.

In each house they are served the traditional Epiphany dish. In Puerto Rico, it is *arroz con gandules* and *lechón asado*, in Venezuela, *hallaca*, and in Colombia *buñuelos*. In Mexico, Epiphany is celebrated with a piñata party. Having a good time on the day of the Three Kings is called *reyar*.

In each house there is a nativity scene. In Puerto Rico it is called *nacimiento*, in Brazil *pesebre* and in Costa Rica, *portal*. Figures of Mary and Joseph with Jesus, shepherds, and animals are placed in a humble stable. The nativity scene also includes the Three Magi that came from the Orient to adore Him.

Blanca Iris Batista is a seminarian at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. Born and raised in Puerto Rico, she has been involved in Hispanic ministries.

G L O S S A R Y

cuatro: A four-stringed guitar.

guitarra: Guitar.

arroz con gandules Rice with pigeon peas.

lechón asado Barbecued pig.

hallaca: A meat pie with a cornmeal crust, flavored with herbs, condiments and wine, wrapped in banana leaves and boiled in water.

caja: An earthenware jar cleverly disguised as an animal, which is filled with toys and candies or other dried food to eat and is meant to be broken open to reveal what's inside.

buñuelos: A version of doughnuts.



MINISTRY IS FOR ALL OF US

Marlene Wilson

“To show great love for God and our neighbors we need not do great things. It is how much love we put in the doing that makes our offering something beautiful for God.”

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

In my book, *How to Mobilize Church Volunteers* (Augsburg Publishing House, 1983, p. 42) I share this story:

“Jane Whosit was new—still not fully comfortable in or accepted by her new church, St. John’s. Her problem was shyness. How she wished she could overcome it—but that’s the way she’d always been. She wanted so much to be a part of things, but she had no idea how to go about it. Then one day a letter came. It was the stewardship form for the year.

Deciding about her gift of money no problem, but she agonized over the time and talent portion. She had very little confidence in her talent she had to share. Yet she wanted to give more than just money—it might be the answer to really becoming a part of this group known and accepted. She lay awake for hours agonizing over what to check. What if she tried something and failed? What if . . . ? What if . . . ? In the morning she reviewed the form again and finally checked two things: typing in the office and helping in kindergarten in Sunday school. She felt a small thrill of anticipation at last she’d have a place to be a part of her church. She laid her form on the altar on Stewardship Sunday and then waited for the phone to ring. She waited . . . and waited and waited . . .

“Then there’s Mrs. Oldstandby, a pillar. She is at present president

St. John's women's group, on the church council, and sings in the choir. She was just asked to help out the church office next week while the secretary is on vacation. She said no because she did not want to let the pastor down and then lay awake at night trying to figure out how she was going to juggle that job on top of everything else.

"Of course, no one means to overlook Jane Whosit or turn out Mrs. Oldenby, but it happens all the time. Churches seem to pile people up or toss them altogether. That is the dilemma! It continues because we have not instituted systems to see that doesn't."¹

The "ministry of a handful" is problematic, theologically as well as organizationally. We as Lutherans believe in the priesthood of all believers, and the constitution of our new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America strongly affirms the ministry of all the baptized. So the question is not whether we should involve more members in the work of the church. Rather it is how do we do it!

Changing World

The first important step is to acknowledge that we live in a rapidly changing world and that to be effective leaders today, we must be flexible enough in what we do and how we do it, to be responsive to the enormous changes affecting the everyday lives of our members. Let me just

mention a few of these societal trends:

1. Forty-five percent of the adult population of the United States today are "baby boomers" between the ages of 25-41.

Implication: This group is the future. We must find ways to involve them now, or the church will suffer enormously in the decades ahead.

2. Seventy percent of the women in this age group work outside the home.

Implication: If we want employed women to be involved in Women of the ELCA programs or projects, we must offer opportunities at night or on weekends.

3. The baby-boom generation highly values participative decision making—that is, being involved in decisions affecting them.

Implication: We must learn to plan *with*, not *for* people, if we want their commitment.

4. Many women in this age group are having their first babies in their 30s, after investing 10-15 years in a career, and if they can afford it, are staying home with their baby a year or more.

Implication: Do we offer opportunities for these women to use their enormous skills and talents in the work of the church? Do we provide child-care or out-of-pocket baby-sitting reimbursement for them while they volunteer? If not, they often cannot afford to help us.

5. The majority of people volunteering in communities today are employed people.

"The 'ministry of a handful' is problematic, theologically as well as organizationally."

Implication: Have we stopped saying, "Don't ask them, they work"? Working volunteers respond to shorter-term, project-oriented opportunities. We need to rethink how we do our work, so more people can be involved doing smaller pieces of work.

6. The "sandwich generation" (ages 42-60) are experiencing the opposite of the empty nest and have often inherited returning adult children, sometimes grandchildren, and perhaps aging parents.

Implication: This is a group of pillars who are now finding that their time and energy is needed elsewhere—in family support situations. We need to learn to share leadership jobs, honor time commitments, give "sabbaticals" and use these people as mentors.

7. For the first time in our nation's history we have more people over the age of 65 than we have teenagers. (In the United States, 2.8 million citizens are now over 85 and 40,000 are over 100.)

Implication: We must be sure we extend the quality of life for our seniors, as science extends the quantity of their lives. One way to do this is to view these "chronologically gifted"

folks as being valuable resources and continue to search for new and different ways for them to be actively involved as long as possible.

8. Seventy percent of people in the United States who claim church membership are in no way active in their congregations except for occasional church attendance!

Implication: Many of these mem-

bers have attempted to become involved at some point (like Jane Whosit) but were overlooked or rejected. Time and Talent forms must be followed up. That can be done easily today through the use of computers.



"The question is not whether we should involve more members of the church. Rather it is how we do it."

Changing Views

Someone once said "nobody likes change but a wet baby" and perhaps that's true. But our attitudes toward change have a powerful impact on who is volunteering and why.

is not—and why. We are, therefore, called upon to reexamine our own perspectives on several important issues:

How We View the Work

Most people today are not looking for ways to fill up time. They have to make extremely difficult choices about how to divide their time between

en work, family, community, and
rch. They want to make a differ-
a. Some questions we need to ask
selves:

. Are we clear about our mission?
ssion motivates, maintenance
sn't. So use your mission as your
recruitment tool.

. Are the jobs we need to fill clear-
defined or are we still saying,
ere's nothing
t?"

. Are the vol-
teer oppor-
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teer ministry
is listed un-
der one of the
three mission
gments, so
every person
ows how that
relates to the
ssion. Not a
d plan!)

4. Are we ex-
ed about what
are asking
ners to take
rt in, or are we
aking turns,"

perate for people to fill slots, tell-
y people, "I've called 10 people and
y're the last on my list"? We need
think of recruitment in terms of in-
atation, not arm-twisting.

How We View Leadership

1. Can we learn to measure our
ccess as a leader by how many oth-
s we have involved, not how many

hours we personally put into the or-
ganization?

2. Is the real problem the "pew sit-
ters" who don't want to be involved—
or is it that the "pillars" won't let go?

3. Can we learn to feel as much
satisfaction from helping others
grow as we feel from doing a job our-
selves?

4. Can a chairperson learn to *lead*
a committee
rather than *be*
the committee?



**"Most people today
are not looking
for ways to
fill up time—
they want to
make a difference."**

How We View Others

1. Do we truly
believe that
every person is a
unique and gift-
ed child of God?

2. Do we trust
our whole-body-
of-Christ theolo-
gy, which as-
sures us that
everything and
everyone we
need has been
provided in that
congregation?

3. Do we un-
derstand the
beauty of diver-
sity? In a group
exercise where
participants are
asked to list the
jobs they like the

most and the least we always find
that every person's favorite job is
someone else's least favorite. It's
amazing!

How We View Ourselves

There is a story about a young
teenage boy who was about to teach
his first Sunday school class—a
group of four-year-olds. His mom



asked him what he was planning to teach that first lesson, and he replied, "Well, the lesson plan says to show them that each person is an individual with different potential and abilities; that each person is valuable for their particular capabilities . . . and that there is value in differences as well as conformity. And if that doesn't work, I guess we'll make clay bunnies!"

When faced with the challenge of dealing with that particular lesson plan, we may all be tempted to make clay bunnies, or go shopping, or clean a closet, or dig dandelions. Anything to keep us from looking seriously at what the lesson implies. If we really believe that each of us is an important, unique child of God, then that belief opens up all kinds of questions, possibilities and responsibilities.

1. Do I really have capabilities and what are they?

2. How do I develop and use to the fullest what I've been given?

3. Who needs whatever it is I have to give?

Only after we have made the decision *to be* can the decision *to do* take on any real meaning. That

means, we must decide to be:

■ Open to God's will and available on God's terms.

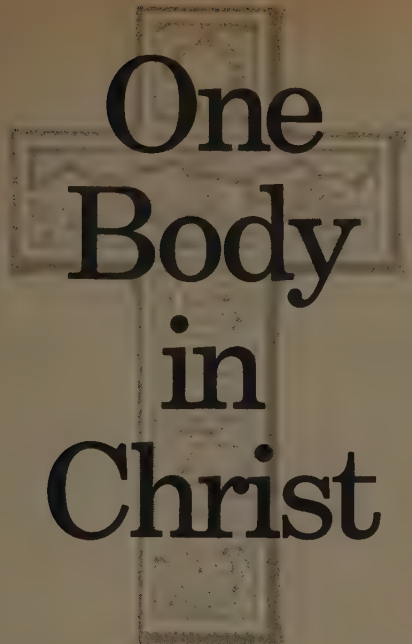
■ Willing to take risks because of our faith—to be vulnerable.

■ Ready to say, "Here I am, God, with all my flaws and shortcomings, and with all my potential as a human being. Use me! Help me find that particular need with my name on it!"

In her book, *Gifts of Grace* (Augsburg, 1982, pp. 64-65), Mary Schramm reminds us of the powerful sermon we preach with our lives:

"Few pay attention to the Christian message if it is not embodied in lives that radiate joy (not a plastic Christian smile, but real joy!). It is easy to distinguish these people from those enduring a life filled with oughtness. To perform a ministry from anything other than a sense of joy is to offer to my brother or sister a cold, resentful heart. To be ministers by using the gifts with which we are blessed is authentic discipleship."²

²Reprinted from *Gifts of Grace* by Mary R. Schramm, copyright © 1982 Augsburg Publishing House.



One Body in Christ

Kathryn Kopf

In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in union with Christ, and we are all joined to each other as different parts of one body. So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us" (Romans 12:5-6a, NIV).

In this passage we recognize that diversity is indeed a part of God's plan in creation. Yet so often we struggle with accepting and respecting that diversity as we witness to our faith.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity provides a special time for Christians of all communions to address this struggle. This year the theme for the week is "Building Community: One Body in Christ," and the scriptural reference is the Romans passage quoted above. Why not take this opportunity and build our own special community to dis-

cuss the theme and celebrate oneness in a devotional setting? Here are some ideas, and prayers, to help you plan such an event.

■ Invite friends from other Christian communions to join you for one session, or a series of sessions, for discussion and reflection on the theme.

■ Select appropriate passages from Scripture, beginning with the Romans text. Others you might use include John 15:11-17, Acts 11:16-18, 1 Corinthians 6:17-20, Philippians 1:27-29, Colossians 3:12-15.

■ Begin your session with one or more hymns, said or sung, to enrich your devotion. Select your own favorites, or use some of the following suggestions from *Lutheran Book of Worship*: "Filled with the Spirit's Power," LBW 160; "The Church's One Foundation," LBW 369; "In Adam We

Continued on page 20

Patricia Evans
Atlanta, Georgia
Presbyterian Church in the USA

God of Love, as we are one in Christ, so let us use our different gifts to build up the community of believers; to be inspired by faith to speak out boldly for human betterment worldwide, to have compassion for suffering, a concern for justice for all humanity, a creative ability to break down barriers that separate, building bridges of understanding. Amen.

Cora Sparrowk
Ione, California
American Baptist Churches, USA

Dear Jesus,
You want us to be one,
You even prayed this.
Yet, sometimes it seems
your body is fragmented.
By the mystery of your
love and grace
draw us closer,
From all regions of your
world—across culture,
gender, age—bring us
to the foot of the cross
There in humility and
Oneness we face the
reality of your sacrifice and
love.
Thank you! Amen.

Jane Shepard
Portland, Oregon
Church of the Brethren

In the midst of a difficult faith journey through the wilderness—when we are tempted to give up, rush blindly ahead, or return to a more secure place in our past—give us the courage to be “your people.” We give thanks for the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and for Jesus Christ who calls us to be one. In his name we pray. Amen.

Eva C. Topping
McLean, Virginia
Greek Orthodox Church

*Holy God, Holy and Mighty,
Holy and Eternal, have mercy
on us. From all hearts
fears, prejudices and
Give all people the grace to
justice always and to live
peace together. Guide our
steps towards paths of
standing and unity. God
love, hear and grant
prayers, through the mediation
of the All-Holy Theotokos.
Amen.*

[*This prayer ends, as do many
Orthodox prayers, with reference to the
Mother of God.]

Cornelia Swain
Memphis, Tennessee
Lumberland Presbyterian Church

God, the builder of community and oneness, create within our every being:

An urgent longing for wholeness and unity,
A love which builds up rather than tears down,
A vision of faith that encompasses the future, and
A will to act that bonds us in peace.

May your spirit be the guiding light that enables us to live in
the accord and give utmost praise for our diversity of gifts.
Through Christ, the author of peace. Amen.

Arnon Rezac-Andersen
Arlington City, Texas
St. Ann Catholic Church

*Creator God, we give you
thanks for creating the magnif-
icent universe from chaos to
cosmos, with the mystery and
majesty of the sky, trees, earth,
water, sun and the covenant of
the rainbow.*

*Loving God, we give you
thanks for creating each of us
an original blessing, to be
caretakers of this universe, and
one another. We covenant to
work continually for a harmo-
nious relationship—with you,
our God; with ourselves; with
others; and with the earth.
United as one body in Christ,
we will build one community.
Amen.*

Janice Cate
Bellevue, Washington
United Methodist Church

*Creator God, mother of all the
world's children, hear our
prayers for a new community
of women and men enfolded in
wraps of peace, love, and jus-
tice.*

*Endow us with imagination
to envision healthy communi-
ties where every child is reared
with a sense of human dignity,
without violence and depriva-
tion.*

*Give us courage to act on be-
half of its realization.*

*Cleanse our thoughts of old
ways of thinking about you
that keep us from working to-
gether.*

*Forgive our resisting ways
and free us to try once more.
Amen.*

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Have All Been One," *LBW* 372; "Lift High the Cross," *LBW* 377; "O Spirit of the Living God," *LBW* 388; "Lord, Send Forth Your Spirit," *LBW* 392.

■ Use the prayers on pages 18-19 as part of your devotions. As the note indicates, you may photocopy these prayers for broader use as part of a women's or congregational project. For instance, you may want to affix the pages to brightly colored construction paper to create a small, attractive poster to display on your congregation's bulletin board. Or you may want to mail or take the prayers to shut-ins in your parish. Or prepare the prayers as a bulletin insert.

A word about the prayers is in order. As special recognition of our oneness with sisters in other churches, several women I have known through Church Women United graciously responded to an invitation to prepare short prayers to assist us in our devotions. You might also want to ask your pastor if they could be included as prayer petitions during Sunday worship at the beginning of this special week. The names of the prayer's writer and her denomination appear before each offering.

To complete the ecumenical pic-

ture, as a Lutheran Christian, compose your own prayer, petitioning God's blessing on Christian unity and write it in the space on the bottom of the page.

When the writers returned their prayers to me, they sent notes of Christian friendship. The messages were reminders of the privilege that awaits those who are open to sisters and brothers in other churches.

■ For your closing, you may want to use James 4:7-12. While it refers to "brothers," sisters, too, need to know that at times we all need a reminder of our weaknesses, even as we affirm our oneness in the body of Christ. Then move on to a hopeful note, using as your hymn, "Lord, Speak to Us, that We May Speak" (*LBW* 40) and closing with St. Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:17-21 (Today's English Version).

Dr. Kathryn Kopf was executive director of Lutheran Church Women from 1975-1987. She served on the Lutheran Church in America's staff team for ecumenical relations and the parish services task group on ecumenism. She was also an LCW liaison with the common council of Church Women United.

Write your own prayer for Christian unity here.

A Light to My Path:

A Study of the Psalms

Frederick and Leola Gaiser

Why Study the Psalms

Psalms should be sung, not studied. "Psalms should be prayed, not analyzed." "Psalms should be experienced, not analyzed." There is truth in each of these statements. The Psalter is a book of poetry, a prayer book, a hymnal. It was the worship book of ancient Israel and has continued to be a devotional treasure for generations of believers.

How should we *study* the psalms? And why? These questions are not unique to the Psalter, of course. One could also say that the Gospel of Mark should be proclaimed, proclaimed apart; yet we spent all last year studying Mark. What kind of answer is this?

Psalms 111 gives us a clue: "Great are the works of the Lord, studied by those who have pleasure in them" (verse 2). That's the answer to the question. We study the Bible because we take pleasure in the Bible. We study psalms because we are convinced that God speaks to us through the deeply human words, and we want to know clearly what God is saying. There is no contradiction between prayer and study. We work on psalms so we can pray them more profoundly.

It is hoped that this study will enable the psalms' prayers, poems, and songs to come alive for you—to be more available for you to use in your moments of despair and doubt, as well as in times of praise and thanksgiving.

One of our Lutheran seminaries states as one of its goals that students should "cultivate an appreciation of the biblical texts which approaches them with reverence and delight, with humor and mystery, with artistic sensitivity and hard work, with adventure and imagination." That is what we mean by Bible study.

But *how* should we study the psalms? The most common method of Bible study is simply to move through a book verse by verse, chapter by chapter. But time won't permit that with 150 psalms. A good commentary will aid you if you want to proceed that way sometime or if you are looking for specific information about a psalm not mentioned here. (Ask your Bible study leader to recommend a few resources. A listing of supplementary resources is included on page 7 of the leader guide to this study.)

Another way to look at psalms is

to catalog them according to types, or genres, and to study examples of each. In that way, working through relatively few psalms can provide an introduction to the whole book. The SEARCH Weekly Bible Studies unit on Psalms (Unit 13) follows this method. You might find it a helpful resource. (Refer to an Augsburg Fortress supply catalog for order information on the series.)

Precisely because the book of Psalms is so rich and varied, no single method of study will cover everything. In the months to come, we will examine selected psalms on the basis of their content. In their experiential language, the psalms work through all the great theological themes of the Bible. They glory in creation and cry for justice. They struggle with the meaning of suffering, and they hope for wellness and healing. They know the despair of bondage and the joy of liberation. Themes such as these will provide the structure for our study.

The psalms chosen for each month present a particular theological issue or concern in relation to that time in the church year or the secular cal-

endar. This selection does not necessarily include the most familiar widely used psalms. Perhaps that is an advantage. It may help us see with new eyes and hear with new ears.

Psalms 111 closes with these well-known words: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who practice it" (verse 10). Study of the Bible is a way to practice that good understanding, to grow in the wisdom which is the mark of the mature believer. But biblical wisdom is never mere information. It is an active quality that involves honest relationships among the learners and between them and God. It provides a solid foundation for all of life. Blessed is the one who "meditates day and night" on the word of God, says Psalm 1. Such a person "is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither" (verse 3). This study aims at green leaves and good fruit. Sink your roots in the Psalms. You will find it a "broad place" (Psalm 31:8) on which to stand.

To order supplementary materials for *A Light to My Path: A Study of the Psalms*, check with your nearest Augsburg Fortress location, order through the Women of the ELCA 1989 catalog, or send your order *with payment* (sorry, Augsburg Fortress cannot bill you) to: Augsburg Fortress Customer Service, Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440. Do not send your order for supplementary materials to the Women of the ELCA in Chicago, or along with a LWT subscription order (either group or individual).

Code	Resource	Price
02-8925	Psalms Resource Book	\$1.
02-8926	Psalms Leader Guide	\$2.

The following resources for *A Light to My Path: A Study of the Gospel of John* (beginning September 1989 in LWT) the following resources will be available in the *summer of 1989*:

Code	Resource	Price
02-8924	John Resource Book	\$1.
02-8923	John Leader Guide	\$2.

What God Is Great Like Our God?

Study Text: Psalm 77

+ C + M + B + 89

These cryptic signs are often found on the doors of Roman Catholic households in Germany during the Epiphany season. Sometimes they remain throughout the year. It is an annual house blessing in the name of the three kings—Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar—marked over the door in chalk by young Epiphany visitors.

What god is great like our God?" asks Psalm 77:13. The season of Epiphany might answer:

□ the God who created the earth and stars, the planets and galaxies, affies and penguins, snowflakes and dogwood trees;

□ the God who visited Israel, raising up Sarah and Abraham, Miriam and Moses, Hannah and David; the God who brought Israel out of Egypt, establishing people in his name;

□ the God who appeared in a manger in Bethlehem, a human child born of a human mother, come not to be served but to serve;

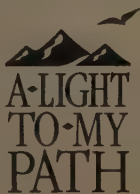
□ the God who blesses the names of ordinary and unknown people in Germany

and the United States, in Namibia and New Guinea, in Austria and Australia.

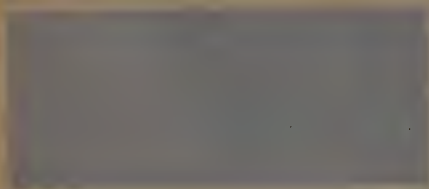
■ How has God been revealed in your life, in your home, in your world? This month's psalm yearns to see God as the Magi did when they visited the child Jesus.

Hearing the Psalm

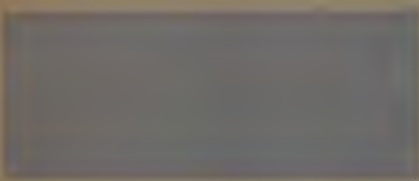
Sometimes phrases from the psalms come easily to us: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;" "Create in me a clean heart, O God;" "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!" But, at other times, psalms (like other types of poetry) are hard to follow, especially when they are recited quickly in public worship. One goal of these sessions will be to try to hear the psalms clearly and in a fresh way. An attempt will be made to change voices and moods, reflecting the changes in the psalm itself. Listen as Psalm 77 is read as it is presented in the Bible study resource book (a companion piece to this study, available from Augsburg Fortress).



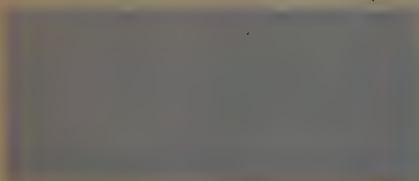
1 Who is the speaker in verses 1-6? Who is the subject in the following verses?



2 What happens to the tone when the psalm turns from the singular voice at the beginning to the plural or collective voice in verses 13-15?



3 Who is the focus in the different parts of the psalm?



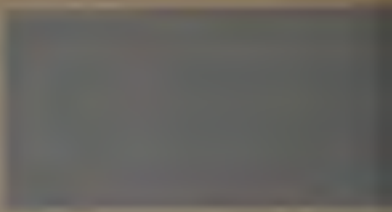
The Moaning of the Psalmist

Reread Psalm 77:1-10.

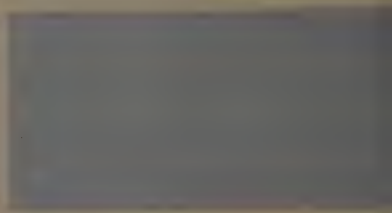
■ Psalm 77 is an example of an individual lament. In these psalms the writer typically cries out to God about broken relationships with God, self, and others.

1 What kind of trouble plagues the writer of these verses? We can learn many things about it, but we never learn the exact cause of the

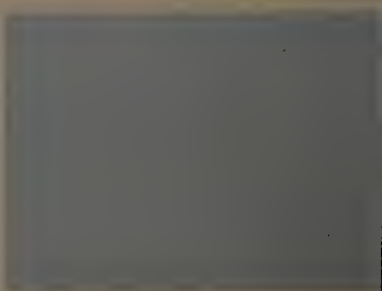
distress. Why might this omission have been helpful for ancient worshippers (and for us)?



2 Note the "I's" and "my's" in these verses. Why is the psalmist concerned with self? Would you call this selfishness? Why or why not?



3 In his commentary on verse 1, Martin Luther says that the psalmist seeks silence "because he has become angry and disturbed and enraged within himself" (*Luther's Works*, vol. 11, page 21). Modern psychology recognizes self-anger as an important cause or symptom of depression. Depression is very common among us, especially in the post-holiday season. How might this psalm benefit a depressed person?



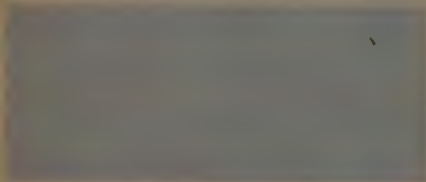
The Memory of the People

Reread Psalm 77:11-20.

4 In the myths of the ancient world, waters and floods were often signs of chaos and destruction. Think about why this was so. In this psalm, how do the floods and waters respond when God appears? What kind of music and sound effects might you imagine to go with verses 16-18? Note the mood of the somewhat similar words in Psalm 98:7-9. How is this different than the mood of Psalm 77?



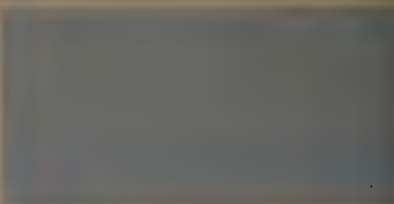
5 *Compassion* has been defined as having both the ability and the willingness to be helpful to others. How does the second part of Psalm 77 respond to the question in verse 9?



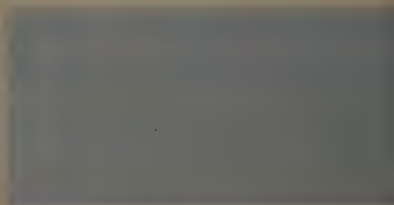
The Mystery of the Presence

1 An epiphany is the appearance of God. When God shows up, things happen! Read Psalm 18:6-19.

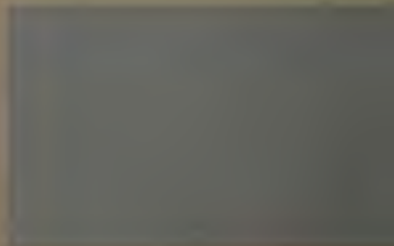
Can you think of times when God's actions have been so dramatic? (Call both biblical and personal examples.)



2 A young seminarian who experiences seizures once said, "Some people have called epilepsy lightning changing; but, no, I would rather save that term for an important event like Baptism." What do you suppose she meant? How is Baptism an epiphany? How might Baptism relate to the water symbolism in Psalm 77:16-20?



3 The third line of Psalm 77 is a surprise. Whose footprints could any outside observer have seen in the Exodus? Why were God's footprints not visible? Was God present? In what way?



Jesus undoubtedly sang psalms when he worshiped in the temple and the synagogue. He died with psalms on his lips. In his distress, he could easily have prayed the first half of Psalm 77. What does it mean to you that Jesus could and did pray this way?

We see God in the mystery of . Have there been times when has been especially true for you? Perhaps members of your group would like to share their experiences.

Christians believe that the God who created the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the cosmos, cares about them and knows their name. “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine” (Isaiah 43:1). Paradoxically, even when we are so troubled that we cannot speak (Psalm 77:4), we cry aloud to God that we may be heard (Psalm 77:1). The psalmist assures us that God does hear and that God comes to save. Psalm 77 invites us to “call to mind,” to “remember,” to “meditate” and “muse” on what God has done. Following this counsel will bring us unexpected rewards.

Worship

Sing together the hymn "Bright and Glorious Is the Sky" (*LBW* 75).

February is Black History Month. We are reminded of people's yearnings for freedom and justice in this world. The psalms are full of this concern. Read and reflect on Psalm 74 with this in mind.

PAULA BURTNES, MARY JOHNSON, KEITH SEHNERT

Holiday Blues

MOOD OR FOOD?

The recent holiday season may have been the best of times for some, but for others the joy of Christ's birth and the anticipation of the coming year may have been darkened by an affliction of mind and body called depression.

The hustle-bustle of the season, the stress of last-minute shopping or busier-than-usual social commitments—all can affect moods. Seasonal reminders of "better days past" may trigger emotional responses from widows, widowers, persons far from home or divorced people. Now, however, new research suggests that more than mood may be involved—holiday food may contribute to depression.

But first, let's look at depression in general. How widespread is it? Experts at the National Institute of Mental Health estimate that 30–40 million Americans have some degree of depression disorder.

At one end of the spectrum are those people who get a mild case of "the blues" more often than others. At the other are those 10–14 million persons with severe symptoms and have what is called "bipolar" or manic-depressive disorder.

In between are individuals with a bevy of symptoms that include fatigue, insomnia, inability to cope with everyday situations, crying

spells and chronic anxiety. Usually these symptoms clear up in a few days. Family and friends, however, should be concerned when depression doesn't lift and the individual can't function normally. If there is no sleep, sexual desire, appetite, energy level and movements are less than normal and if their sadness persists week after week, professional help is then needed. Special alarm should be registered if there is a history of depression in the family.

The ancient Greeks called depression *melancholia* (black bile) and believed it was caused by digestive disorders in the liver. In the Middle Ages, depressed persons were burned at the stake because people believed they were possessed by evil spirits. Martin Luther wrote during his stay at Wartburg, "All heaviness of mind and melancholy comes of the devil." Sigmund Freud speculated that the trouble was not relational but neurochemical.

Though the exact causes of depression are in doubt, the experts agree upon these facts:

- There are twice as many depressed women as men.
- An estimated 15% of depressed persons will eventually commit suicide.
- Depression runs in families. Recent studies at Yale show that c

Experts at the National Institute of Mental Health estimate that 30-40 million Americans have some degree of depression disorder.

of depressed parents are much more likely to succumb to the disease than children of nondepressed par-

ents. Up to 90% of patients with severe depression can be helped with lithium or antidepressants. Patients with milder forms of depression are helped with some sort of talk thera-

py. John W. Crayton, professor of psychiatry at Loyola Medical School in Chicago, recently reported findings that show many of our moods may be related to things we eat. His research supports the new "neuropsychoneuro" view of mental health problems.

Crayton studied patients who came to his clinic complaining of depression, anxiety, fatigue, mental confusion, irritability, headaches, allergic allergies and a variety of medical complaints. After a series of blood tests and questionnaires, he divided them into two groups, "behavioral reactors" and "behavioral nonreactors." Behavioral reactors were patients whose mood could not be explained by the usual psychiatric associations and seemed to be triggered by things they ingested.

The study found that behavioral reactors to food were more likely to have immune system changes than nonreactors. While some reactions to foods may be due to "allergy," other possibilities should be consid-

ered. Sensitivity to an amino acid called tyrosine, found in aged cheeses, red

wine and processed meat.

- Additives to foods and drinks such as sulfites, nitrates, tetrazine and that Chinese-food favorite, monosodium glutamate.

- Contaminants in food including bacteria (leading to "food poisoning"), lead and other toxic metals.

- Toxic fragments from improperly digested wheat and milk products.

- Unusual amounts of the amino acid tryptophane, found in some carbohydrates and food supplements.

- True food allergies to common foods such as strawberries and chocolate, and other symptoms resulting in rashes, puffy eyes, wheezing, etc.,

- Yeast overgrowth called Candida-Related Complex or "CRC".

Since it is known that the only food source for *Candida albicans* (the cause of CRC) is sugar, it is suggested that added sugar in the diet causes the colonies of this yeast to grow more rapidly. This growth puts out toxins that interfere with the biochemistry of the brain, triggering depression, fatigue and moodiness.

The links between mood changes and sugar are well known. Ask any grade-school teacher what time of the year they dislike the most. One replied, "The week after Halloween—the kids are so moody and hyper, they drive us crazy!"

So if this year your Christmas was not as "merry" as it should have been and New Year's not as "happy" as you expected—it could have been the mood—but it could have also have been the food!

Ofelia Gaenslen

Ofelia Gaenslen sparkles! Her eyes twinkle as she talks. Her flair for the dramatic abounds in the stories she tells of her native Puerto Rico and her experiences—as kindergarten teacher and parish worker at San Pablo Lutheran Church, a leader on the local and national boards of Lutheran Church Women (LCW), a predecessor to Women of the ELCA and as creator of numerous inspirational programs for women.

Gaenslen remembers the Augustana missionaries who established the first Lutheran church in Puerto Rico. One missionary in particular, Sophia Probst, was a great influence on her. “She became the inspiration of my life! Sophia cared! She visited the homes. She would talk with the mothers. She helped the poor. She was truly dedicated.” At age 10 Ofelia often accompanied Probst on her home visits. Soon she decided, “I would like to be a missionary, too!”

She did just that. After graduating from the University of Puerto Rico in 1934 she returned to San Pablo as a kindergarten teacher and parish worker where she served for 38 years. She organized the first women’s group and began creating pro-

grams for them. She became involved in LCW, helped organize the Caribbean synodical unit of LCW, and was the first woman from the Caribbean to be elected to the national board.

Gaenslen says, “I believe the most important thing is evangelism. If evangelism is working, then eventually everyone else will fall into place.”

Ofelia Gaenslen’s first husband, the Rev. Evaristo Rios, died in 1970. Twenty years later she married and moved to Milwaukee, where she continues to teach and to prepare programs for women’s groups. Her eyes light up when she



“I believe the most important thing is evangelism.”

about preparing the programs. “Latin people love dramatization,” she explains. “We dramatize everything!” So she works hard to make the programs she prepares dramatic and interesting, informative and memorable.

Gaenslen researches the programs extensively, often searching far and wide for objects to add to displays that enhance each program. She is in demand as a speaker throughout the area, but insists, “Anyone can do what I have done. Just read and study . . . and use your imagination!”

Marilyn Miller

important to me that kids, as possible, see the world as one neighborhood—that we're all related." Marilyn Miller's large, expressive brown eyes convey her commitment to opening the eyes of young people.

Member for 23 years of Cross Lutheran Church in Milwaukee's integrity, this wife, mother, teacher and leader has had ample opportunity to do just that. Since age 18 she has directed the youth choir at the church. "Every year for four years I make the choir my priority. It's important to get these kids away from the city. It opens their minds and eyes.

They're exposed to different cultures. They work with families to make new friends.

When they come back home they see the world as a different place. This was especially true after the youth visited refugee camps while on a mission in Texas. When we come home bringing something back to Cross—something we hadn't had before."

Miller acknowledges that the youth choir (in which she also sang as a child) has been an education in human relations. "I've learned to live with human nature . . . to pray for others . . . to make others feel important. I've tried to teach kids to be respectful of other human beings regardless of their economic status—

to teach them that as a Christian, you acknowledge your brother or sister as part of you."

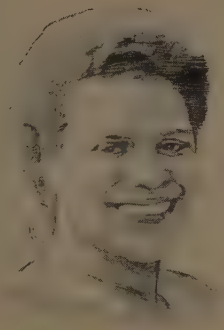
In her work as an advisor in the College of Engineering at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Miller assists students of color. "When I find a troubled student I tell them how I get through life—through Jesus Christ! This is how you help them endure. It's a very stressful time in a young person's life."

In 1986 Miller went to Venezuela as part of a North American team attending a conference on urban ministry. This first trip outside the United States "opened my eyes to the world. I can't begin to explain how I felt when I saw huts in the hillside washed away by

the rain! If we don't see it ourselves we don't understand it."

Miller's ministry of opening the eyes of youth may take a slightly different direction in the future. "When one young student asked if she could bring her baby to campus, it hit me—the epidemic of youth pregnancies in Milwaukee is of great concern to me."

But Marilyn Miller will still be vitally concerned, too, with the way the eyes of her own 6-year-old daughter, Jovanna, see the world. "We talk all the time!" Marilyn laughs.



"As a Christian, you acknowledge your brother or sister as part of you."

Continued on next page

Sharon Metz

Sharon Metz, director of Lutheran Human Relations Association of America (LHRAA) in Milwaukee, establishes eye contact and gets down to business. She says, "I ask the basic questions: Why are we doing this? Why the ridiculous focus on the accumulation of wealth—not only individuals, but churches and organizations? What do other people not have? What do you need? Sometimes people just get mad at you for asking," she admits with a disarming smile.

For the past year, this 12-year veteran of the Wisconsin state legislature has headed the LHRAA, an organization that, in her words, "provides a home for Lutherans who want to work on justice issues

when some churches and areas do not. We present information on a variety of issues to combat racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression in church and society.

"I believe you have to walk with people, rather than do for them. We want to empower people to speak for themselves, or accompany them when they speak."

Metz says of her new job, "It's a constant amazement to me that here I have the opportunity to work on these issues, express my faith and help others . . . and get paid for it!"

Her days fly by, full of variety: writing grant proposals, communicating with people nationwide, writing advocacy papers, contacting pastors and church leaders, visiting congregations, eliciting support and preaching sermons on racism.

The year 1984 was a "coming together" for her. That year she

turned 50, became a grandmother, graduated from the University of Wisconsin, Greektown, while serving on the legislature.

In 1986 she won the race for tenant governor of Wisconsin. Metz won a primary in a fair race, the woman of the ticket. "It was a great experience," she says. "I'm again!"



"I have the opportunity to express my faith and help others."

Metz and her husband, a teacher, chose to live and serve in the city of Green Bay. They have four sons, and their marriage survived 14 years of commuting. Metz's advice to women today: "Don't be intimidated and don't dream too big. Why not think: I can graduate from college . . . go into the ministry and do the work I really want?"

Donna Streufert is a free-lance writer from Milwaukee. She teaches human relations at Concordia College in Mequon, Wisconsin.

12 BOOKS FOR THE COMING YEAR

Rod Olson

you now, or have you ever been member of a book discussion group? I am, and it is one of the most fun, enjoyable, and stimulating activities on my calendar. I want to encourage you to seek out such a group or form one yourself. Think of the interesting people you will meet, plus the ideas you will encounter through the books you read and discuss together. No longer will you experience the frustration of having read a book and especially enjoyed it without finding anyone to discuss it with.

Book discussion groups are easy to organize. Get a dozen or so people to commit themselves for a year, decide the books to be read, where to meet, how long (an hour and a half works well for us), and have each member volunteer to lead one discussion. We have a picnic in the spring when each member nominates and votes for books to be discussed in the coming months. Modify the plan to suit your own situation. But I'll bet that, having tried it for a year, you will continue. My group is in its 16th year and going strong. We look forward to the third day of each month.

Here are 12 recent books that lend themselves especially well to discussion and that will add information and inspiration to the months in 1989.

1

The Unfolding Drama of the Bible by Bernhard Anderson is a good book to begin the year. In the brief compass of 90 pages it presents the full sweep of the Bible from

beginning to end. All readers, and especially discussion leaders, will appreciate the "Questions to Think About" at the end of each chapter.

2

In Search of Faithfulness by William H. Diehl. What does your religious faith have to do with your occupation, the decisions you make, your family life? Diehl is cer-

tainly not the first person to ask this question, but few have dealt more intelligently with it. And there is not a Christian alive who is not touched by this concern. A great discussion book.

3

Judaism: An Introduction for Christians by James Limburg. Few of us Christians know as much as we should about the religion of the Old Testament and of Jesus.

This is a clearly written book, with discussion questions at the end.

4

Confidence: How to Succeed at Being Yourself by Alan Loy McGinnis offers practical suggestions and fascinating stories and anecdotes to show how you can in-

crease your self-confidence without falling into the trap of self-worship. Discussion leaders will especially appreciate *Confidence Study Guide* by Irene Getz, based on the book and available separately.

5

Serving the Word: Lutheran Women Consider Their Calling edited by Marilyn Preus. Luther said, "The ministry of the Word belongs to all." This book gives ex-

amples of some of the ways in which Lutheran women have understood their call to serve the Word—as ordained ministers, worship leaders, rural-life advocates, college and seminary professors, deaconesses, volunteers, and many other areas. A challenging and enlightening book to discuss.



6

Fatherhood by Bill by is a truly funny for parents—not ju thers—that also o keen insights and p cal wisdom.

7

The God Named lowed: The Lo Prayer for Toda John Killinger is a look at the Lord's P by one of America's standing preachers.

8

What Christians lieve by Hans Schw a clear, thoughtful e ination of the Apo Creed.

9

Diary from a South rican Prison by T nuwani Simon Far is a harrowing first son account of the s ing inflicted on this theran pastor v

empowered by the gospel, challenge the apartheid system. "Reading autobiography," writes Be Naude, a white South African a ist and pastor, "is not only a pr but an absolute necessity."

10

Luther the Ref er by James M. K son has been c "the best comple ography of Luth our times." Base current Luther s

arship, the book reads like a and brings Luther to life with c and insight unmatched by pre books. Discuss this book in Oc in connection with Reformation or in November, the month o ther's birth.

1 Unified in Hope: Arabs and Jews Talk about Peace, edited by Carol J. Birkland, contains 19 interviews with Arabs and Jews living in Israel or in occupied territories. Rosemary d Reuther, the noted Catholic journalist, has remarked that from interviews "one can learn more about the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is all about from a hundred books of historical and political analysis that argue from one side or the other."

2 An excellent book to end the year is When All You've Ever Wanted Isn't Enough by Harold Kushner. When we are driven almost to distraction by the blaring commercialism and materialism of Christmas and looking forward to making resolutions in the new year, the title of this book calls us to "The Search for a Life that Matters." This book is based on what the author, Rabbi Harold Kushner, calls the most dangerous book in the Bible—the book of Ecclesiastes. You will quickly see why millions of other Christians have already made this book a nationwide bestseller.

This list is just a sample of the variety and quality of books available for purchase. I hope you will find this helpful and that it will encourage you to become involved in a book discussion group. All books on this list, including *Serving the Word* (\$11.95), are priced between \$4.50 and \$8.95, so in addition to being stimulating reading, they are also affordable. To purchase or order these titles, contact your local bookstore, near-

est Augsburg Fortress bookstore, or by joining the Augsburg Reading Club.

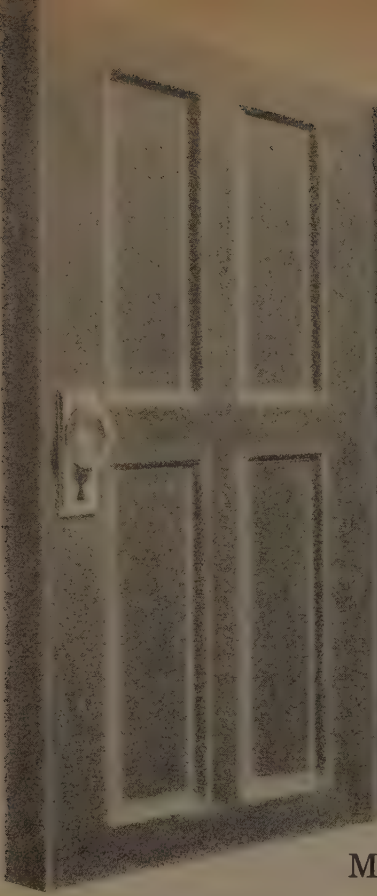
All the books mentioned in this article plus dozens of other stimulating books have been offered to Reading Club members in recent months.

This book club offers you a main selection and four alternate selections every month, at a 20 percent discount. There is no minimum purchase required, no obligations. An order card is enclosed with each monthly newsletter for you to indicate which book or books you would like to order. Reading Club members who buy five or more books in a year receive, free of charge, the current issue of the beautiful holiday publication, *Christmas: The Annual of Christmas Literature and Art*.

To join, write to Augsburg Reading Club, 426 South Fifth Street, Box 1209, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440. New members will receive a free copy of *Confidence: How to Succeed at Being Yourself*.

Happy reading.





OPENING AN INVOLVING DOOR

Myrna Sheie

Three young women would like the Women of the ELCA to provide "involving doors" for them in the church. The lack of such doors may be one reason, as one of them says, "You have to look hard to find young adults in most churches."

These three young women—Julia Flachman, Stephanie Peterson, and Kim Schuster—are in their early twenties. Schuster and Flachman are college graduates in their first jobs, Schuster as a territory manager for a major oil company and Flachman as an accountant for a sales-incentive company. Peterson is a senior at a college of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and is looking forward to student teaching next spring.

Their lives have changed when they were actively involved in ministries. They were youth leaders in the former ALC and ALA. Kim Schuster, for instance, has just completed her term as youth representative on the executive committee of the Lutheran World Federation.

Kim Schuster points out that many young women have developed leadership skills through church, 4-H, scouting, and other organizations. "I'd hate to have us starve," she says. "I'd hate to have us knock on the door again and say, 'Can I be involved?'"

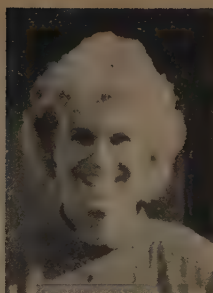
Expecting people to knock on the door is a mistake, she believes. "Young people, the elderly, people with handicapping conditions



Julia Flachman



Stephanie Peterson



Kim Schuster

knocking at the doors to get in." Until the church reaches out to all kinds of people, "they'll either go somewhere else, or they'll stop coming."

One way to open an involving door is to reach out to young people, the elderly, people with disabilities, and people of color. Reach out, in other words, to people who may be missing from your church's—and your women's group's—activities.

Stephanie Peterson presents another suggestion for opening an involving door. "It's incredible what the church has done for me," she says. "I would like to give some of myself back."

Peterson attends a church in town rather than worshipping with her college congregation. She works with her congregation's youth group, but admits that she doesn't know many people. "I feel welcome at the congregation, but I don't feel a part of it." As she looks toward her first teaching assignment—probably in an unfamiliar community—she would "really like to be involved in something."

Her suggestion to those in congregations? "Invite young women. Make them feel welcome."

Julia Flachman has been knocking at the door, she says, but has discovered that it is closed to her. Her request was submitted to synodical task forces for synodical task forces. No

response. She wrote to indicate interest in a specific program. No response. "Does the organization have so many volunteers that they can pick and choose?" She admits that she's frustrated, especially because "the only thing I got was a request for financial help."

At this point, she is unsure how she wants to be involved, but she is still interested. "I want an opportunity to find out," she says.

Her suggestion is straightforward: "evangelize in your own congregation. Worry first about where the young women are—not what to do once you find them—and then reach out."

Three young women. They have leadership experience, strong faiths, they are willing to serve, and they love the church. What happens if the door is a revolving door that admits them as teens, but pushes them out into the secular world as they mature?

The "involving door" opened by the Women of the ELCA would offer, as Stephanie Peterson says, "a place to find community within the church." Among women of varied ages, Kim Schuster could discuss the way her colleagues at work dismiss Baptism and the Eucharist as merely ceremonial events which are fine for her—but not for them. Peterson, and young women like her, could discov-

er wisdom about balancing work, home, and church. Flachman and others like her could find programs to match their energy. And, as Peterson says, "Where better to do all this but in a church community? In the church, we have people plus the dynamic of faith."

For Schuster, the first few years of the ELCA represent a "golden opportunity." She refers generally to the ELCA's goals for inclusiveness, but specifically to the Women of the ELCA's goals for involving young women. "Not much will happen," she says, "unless specific people—pastors, congregational leaders, synodi-

cal and churchwide officers—make an effort to involve them."

Opening the Door

These young women—and thousands more like them—are asking for an opportunity to be involved. Peterson says, "I wouldn't want to change the Women of the ELCA completely. It's wonderful to get together to talk, to do Bible studies and to work on service projects. These three do offer suggestions, however, that may open the door to involvement to young women."

Here are ten of their best:

1. Reach out to those who are missing, especially young women. Invite and welcome them.

2. Evangelize within your own congregation and recruit young women at other levels. In the local congregation, find the young women and invite them. At the synodical and churchwide levels, find the young leaders. As Schuster says, "Contact the people. Young women were youth leaders before and after me." Flachman sees opportunities for recruitment, too. "My fantasy is to get youth leaders on a data base. Get referrals: who do you know? It could be a pyramid approach."

3. Listen to young women. Find out from the young women in your congregation what would attract them to the Women of the ELCA. Their ideas may be the fresh and exciting ones you have been looking for.

Schuster feels that this is a perfect time for listening. "It's great that the Women of the ELCA is just in the developing stages," she says, "I want to say, 'I hear you're involving young women. How are you doing that? Is there anything I can help with?'" Her guess is that she is not alone in being willing to help.

4. Vary meeting times. All three women confessed that the regular meeting times for women's groups conflicted with their work or school schedules. Meeting at varied times would make it possible for young women to attend. Schuster thinks that will be increasingly necessary.

There will be changes in how people are involved in the church," she says. "There will be less long-term involvement with a single group. There will be more variety, more meetings based on people's interests and needs."

Vary the activities. As Peterson says, "Just consider new possibilities." She suggested a variety of creative options: water aerobics, community encounters, seminars. Flachman added the possibility of Bible studies and other activities for college women home for the summer. "In the summer," she says, "there was nothing for my age group to do."

Provide Bible studies. This requirement has not changed. Young women, like the generations before them, crave the opportunity to come into the Word.

Make it cross-generational. As Peterson says, "I may be different in age, interests, and life-style, but I am part of the family of God. I didn't fit in at first, I'd still participate. I can learn from those who are different from me."

Select young delegates. Involve interested young women in regional and churchwide conventions. Schuster confesses, "Not being at the women's convention is a handicap. Young women were not involved because they didn't know the structure." Flachman agrees, "I feel like I was left out. I wanted to get in on the inception: the mission statement, the constitution."

Spread the word! Peterson reads *The Lutheran* and Lutheran Almanac Today secondhand—after her parents have mailed them to her. Flachman says that much of the information about Women of the ELCA is informal—sent to those who are already involved. "If you're looking to get young women involved who haven't been before, they'll never find out that way."

Embrace new programs. Schuster expresses hope that new programs will come both locally and churchwide. As new programs are developed churchwide, local women's groups can "grab onto them." Local groups, however, can also encourage that new programs and ideas be developed churchwide. This joint encouragement will help to "open the revolving door."

The revolving door does not open for young women, the Women of the ELCA may lose a generation of women with faith, leadership skills, and

positive new ideas. Some may leave the church. Others may, as Peterson says, "Start something themselves if they're not invited."



Members of the board of Women of the ELCA. Front row, from left: Ruth Wong, Joyce Transgrud, Zelda Whetzel, Virginia Hash, Gail Hendrickson, Jeanne Rann, Delphia Haukins, Sharon Barnes, Marlene Park, Raquel Hodge. Back row: Judith Springe, Nancy Mitchell,

Meet the Churchwide Board

re, alphabetically, are the 21 women elected at the 1987 Constituting Convention of Women of the CA to serve as your board for the next three years of the organization. They faithfully put in many hours of work and prayer on behalf of women in the church. We thought you'd like to meet them. So we asked each of them to describe herself in some 60 words or less (no small task, by the way—try it sometime in your own words or circles as a personal exercise or for introductions).—ED.

Esther Arne
Fayetteville, NC
Region 9 Synod B
(North Carolina)

theran by choice; privileged by opportunity; handicapped by my own limitations; willing to take risks; able to lead and be led; optimistic; positive; persistent; knows that things

will work out for the best, but would like to help make it so; and grateful for the personal growth and friendships made possible through the women's organization of the church. That's Esther.

Sharon Barnes
Austin, MN Region 3, Synod I
(Southeastern Minnesota)

Wife, mother, grandmother, student working toward A.A. degree at community college. Active with local social action committee and leader of a small Bible study for women who are biblically illiterate.

Has served as conference president, district secretary and president in former women's group, and held various circle and local offices. Has been a member of congregation's board of deacons, the education committee and served as a Bethel Series teacher.

Betty Ann Boyd
Lakewood, CO
Region 2, Synod E
(Rocky Mountain)

Child of God; fortunate to have been part of the supportive and enabling community of the women's organization; hopefully always "becoming"—learning, growing and being enabled—with the goal of affirming and enabling others. Transplanted New Englander, former synodical unit president and treasurer, co-chair of synod transition team. Serves on synod council and congregational church council. Community volunteer and leader, wife, mother of two teens and self-employed person searching for new career direction.

Anne Briggs
Chicago, IL Region 5,
Synod A
(Metropolitan Chicago)

Member of the evangelism committee of the synod. Active in local congregation, Trinity Lutheran Evangelical Church, where she is president of congregation. Recently celebrated 32nd wedding anniversary with husband, Norman. Mother of two adult daughters, Karen and Keli; a registered nurse with B.S. degree who works full time at Chicago Osteopathic Hospital Home Health Agency ministering to the South Side community of Chicago.

Gwen Carr
Salem, OR Region 1,
Synod E (Oregon)

Attends Our Savior Lutheran Church in Salem; is a management

systems analyst and a single parent of a 17-year-old son who began automotive mechanics school in Arizona in October.

Confirmed at Community Lutheran in Los Angeles. Became first council president of First Lutheran in Carson, California.

Has taught Sunday School, sung in choir, served on wide range of church committees. Enjoys public speaking and facilitating team projects. Strong prayer advocate, is energized by prayer. Believes God would have us be uncomfortable with the state of the world.

Pauline M. Fritz
Richmond, IN Region 6,
Synod C (Indiana-Kentucky)

Professional volunteer, organizer, choir director, piano teacher, organizer, author, wife, mother, grandmother. Active in congregational life. Has served as president and in other elected positions on church and community executive boards and agencies.

Facilitates workshops on leadership and organizational skills. Has published articles. Is a peer counselor/tutor for persons who are battered, abused, rape victims, teen dropouts, drug addicts, and GE students; was a Lutheran World Federation guest to Ethiopia and Tanzania to view world hunger programs.

Hattie M. Hammer
Duncanville, TX Region 4,
Synod D (Northern
Texas-Northern Louisiana)

A child of God born in Brooklyn, NY. Wife of a Lutheran clergyperson.

for 28 years.

mother of two young adults,
a graduate teaching assistant
in the computer science department
at Wichita State University, Kansas,
Debbie, a junior social work major
at Texas Lutheran College, Se-

an educator currently teaching
in an elementary school. A
volunteer active in Literacy Learn-
ing Center, Inc., and American As-
sociation of University Women. A
graduate student in school adminis-
tration at Texas Women's University,
Ft. Worth, Texas.

Virginia Hash
Cedar Falls, IA Region 5,
Synod F (Northeastern Iowa)

lover of travel, knitting, reading
baking cookies and breads, who
spouse of 30 years shares some
country acres with a few cattle,
horses, and assorted barn cats. Since
1980 has served as associate dean of
continuing education and special
programs at the University of North-
Iowa. She holds a doctorate from
the University of Iowa in counseling.
Serves as vice-president of North-
Iowa Synod of the ELCA and
board regent for Wartburg Theo-
logical Seminary and board of direc-
tors for Greenwood Lutheran Chil-
dren's Home. [*Treasurer of the
Board*]

Delphia Hawkins
Oklahoma City, OK
Region 4, Synod C
(Arkansas-Oklahoma)

family says I am America's num-
ber-one volunteer, because I care
about the quality of life for people,

but especially for women and chil-
dren. Experience as a single parent
has provided me with hard knocks
I'd like to have other single parents
and children avoid where possible.
As a member of a congregation that
is predominately made up of people
of color, I've learned to live my faith
based on the church's theme, "We
move on a promise." [*Secretary of the
Board*]

Gail Hendrickson Seattle, WA
Region 1, Synod B
(Northwestern Washington)

For the last 10 years, as I have been
privileged to serve in volunteer lead-
ership positions in the church, I have
been wrestling with the meaning of
ministry. I believe ministry implies
that we use fully the opportunities
set before us to: serve humbly, but
with conviction; enable and empow-
er women to grow and be nurtured;
affirm each other as we act out our
faith commitment.

Ministry is the reason for our
women's organization to exist. I am
glad to be challenged by this com-
munity of women! [*Vice-president of
the Board*]

Raquel Francis Hodge
Charlotte Amalie, Virgin Islands
Region 9, Synod F (Caribbean)

For the women's organization I have
served in a number of positions. Also
served on synod executive board and
as secretary for the larger church; as
council secretary, evangelism com-
mittee chairperson and Sunday
school teacher. Served as secretary
for the PTA and the Federal Execu-
tive Association. Presently I am a
council member, and teach Sunday

school. I am married, have three daughters and two granddaughters. I work for the Social Security Administration as an operations supervisor. I speak Spanish and English.

Jenine E. Jordahl
Westby, WI
Region 5, Synod L
(Southwestern Wisconsin)

Clergy spouse, homemaker, mother of two teens, synod vice-president and professional volunteer. Song leader, speaker, retreat leader, counselor and friend. Energized by: people, conversation, reflection, good jokes, reading, walking, new ideas and insights, and Women of the ELCA.

Margaret "Peggy" Joslyn
Clinton, NY Region 7, Synod D
(Upper New York)

For 31 years I have been serving in the women's group in various local and synodical unit functions, including synodical unit president, and participated in a 1987 trip to Eastern bloc countries. Also served on the Upstate synod transition team and chaired the synod's organizing convention. My full-time employment is director, district office for a New York state senator. A special love—other than for Paul, my pastor husband, four children and five granddaughters—is music, particularly singing.

Nancy Mitchell
Great Bend, KS Region 4,
Synod B (Missouri-Kansas)

Greetings from Kansas, from wheat

fields and spacious skies. My life has been spent in Kansas weaving together my roles as wife, mother, secretary, volunteer, craft shop owner, basket weaver and craftmaker. And now I have the added joy of weaving together the many new friendships and experiences of Women of the ELCA as we share the love of Christ.

Marlene B. Park
Rockford, IL Region 5,
Synod B (Northern Illinois)

Calling: teacher, once in public schools, now as volunteer in my congregation (adults, confirmation VCS), in women's organizations and in the wider church as a speaker and retreat leader. Catch phrases of the 80s—"women in transition" and "sandwich generation"—are current realities as we settle into a new life and support our children and parents in their struggles to maintain and establish their independence.

Marlene Raack
Gibsonia, PA Region 8,
Synod B
Southwestern Pennsylvania)

Homemaker, mother of four grown children, the youngest about to graduate from college. Returned to full-time teaching 10 years ago after years of substitute work. Husband Bob teaches boys' physical education in the same junior high school where I teach eighth-grade physical science and earth and space science.

I like travel, photography, reading, needlework, gardening and remodeling the family home. Trinity has been my church home since early childhood.

Jeanne Rapp
 Mt. Pleasant, IL Region 5, Synod C
 Central/Southern Illinois)

a wife, mother, grandmother, leader, churchwoman; however, recently my granddaughter described me as her "traveling grandmother." My journeys have been to visit women in international settings and at women's synodical conventions. I was given a ceramic statue of my hand embracing a person, inscribed with these words, "See! I do not forget you. I have carved you in the palm of my hand." Today these words continue to remind me of my source of empowerment in my role as *President of the board*]

Judith Kay Springer
 Dayton, OH Region 6, Synod F
 (Southern Ohio)

I would describe myself as a most joyful and joy-filled child of the living God, whose life has been touched and changed through association with one of the predecessor women's organizations and who counts it an honor and privilege to serve on the board of Women of the ELCA. I was introduced to Pastor Charles Springer, whom I met while sharing my experiences from a study program in Africa. I am a student in the Department of Religion at Wright State University.

Joyce E. Trangsrud
 Bismarck, ND Region 3, Synod B
 (Eastern North Dakota)

volunteer worker, substitute teacher, wife, and mother of four children. Enjoys new chal-

lenges and experiences, plus music, camping, hiking, skiing, gardening and restoring old furniture. Has served on numerous local, conference, and district committees and boards including being a global "Woman to Woman" visitor to Madagascar. Has been active in youth work, stewardship, and justice issues.

Zelda Whetzel
 Bergton, VA Region 9,
 Synod A (Virginia)

I am Zelda Whetzel. My family includes my husband Stuart, four daughters, one son-in-law, two Siamese cats, and four hounds. We live in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, nestled between the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Allegheny Foothills. I work with children in the Chapter I reading program and serve as church organist. I enjoy people, music, volleyball, and summer vacations!

Ruth Wong
 Alhambra, CA Region 2,
 Synod B
 (Southern California West)

Fluent in Chinese and English, mother of three grown children: Timothy, Titus, Tamara. With her pastor husband Joseph, she has served in parishes in Oklahoma, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. In Los Angeles served a social ministry in Chinatown. Helped to organize the Chinatown Service Center and senior citizen nutritional programs. She and her husband were named outstanding citizens of Los Angeles Chinatown by mayor Tom Bradley. Together they serve Gloria Dei Lutheran Church.

A Tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. on the Anniversary of His Birth



As you read this, Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday (observed on January 16th this year) is upon us. In honoring the hero, let us not ignore the man and his wisdom as we hasten to create a myth. I fear that if we concentrate our energy on celebrating a hero who is larger than life, the dream will fade. If we shape a standard that will be unattainable for the average person seeking to live the good news, we will let ourselves off the hook!

King's life calls us to the exact opposite. His life is a challenge to each of us to reach into the depths of our soul and make a commitment to create a world where the dignity of each person will be respected.

Martin Luther King Jr., The Person

Who was this Martin Luther King Jr.? He was born on January 15, 1929 to Alberta and Martin King. Georgia was the backdrop for his faith and moral development. As a young child Martin came face to face with the evil of racism and discrimi-

nation. At six, white children who had previously been his friends refused to play with him. He was shunned.

King's father and grandfather were both ministers. He witnessed the courage of his parents and grandparents as they worked for civil rights. At a young age, he committed himself to the service of Black people. He planned to become a lawyer or a doctor.

King was an excellent student. At fifteen he enrolled at a leading college for Black men, Morehouse College in Atlanta. While there, Benjamin Mays, the college president, inspired Martin to consider ministry. Dr. Mays, himself a minister, spoke frequently about social justice. He took note of Martin King and later became his mentor and counselor.

King's experience with Mays reinforced his earlier experiences with his father and grandfather. He decided to change his profession to ministry. However, he was not convinced that religion was the avenue for social change.

To train for the ministry King attended Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania. Here he was in-

to the ideas of Mohandas Gandhi. King was impressed with Gandhi's principles of peace directed at revolutionizing the social system of India. In his eyes, Gandhi's principles were in line with the teachings of Christ.

Upon graduation King received a scholarship to pursue doctoral studies in theology. He devoured the works of some of the world's greatest theologians and philosophers. King was now committed to a lifelong struggle for social change.

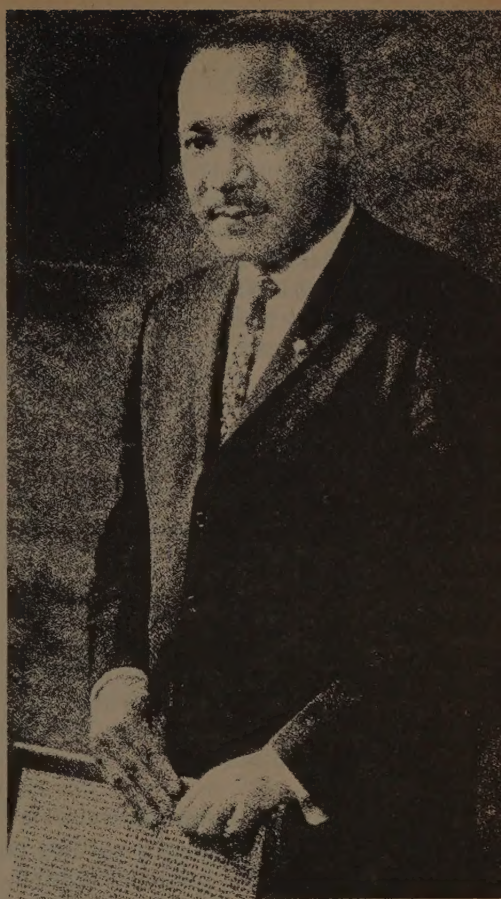
Martin Luther King Jr. had grown in awareness since he delivered his first sermon to the congregation at his father's church at the age of 17. He recognized the challenge of the gospel and the need for peaceful means and the requirement of a lifelong commitment.

Martin Luther King Jr., The Hero

What of King the hero? The dictionary defines a hero as "one admired for his/her achievements; one who shows great courage; a central figure in an event or period." Martin Luther King Jr. was all of these. He is an American hero for all the world, not merely a hero for Black Americans.

Martin Luther King Jr. had deep religious convictions which shaped his decisions and his behavior. He opened his mind and his heart for the struggles of the future. Martin Luther King Jr. was a man of courage. He preached about injustice in the United States. When called upon to be a leader in a major movement for giving dignity to the downtrodden, he was willing and able to accept the

challenge. He was filled with hope, a hope he had to all he encountered. It was not a blind hope for a better tomorrow. It was a hope grounded in a belief that human beings can work to-



"He is an American hero for all the world, not merely a hero for Black Americans."

ward the greater good of all. He also had a belief in the democratic ideals of this country. His dream was not merely that Black Americans would be treated equally, but that the ideals expressed by our founding fathers and mothers would become a lived

"We are not and cannot be in the struggle alone."

reality for all. Martin King, who would be slain in 1968, was at times afraid, but he did not fall prey to fear.

For most of us, when we think of Martin Luther King Jr., we think of the King of 1963, but not of 1968. We are familiar with the words of his "I Have a Dream" speech. We must learn also the words of his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and his address on Vietnam to the Riverside Church in New York.

King had seen the connections between the occurrences in the United States and the way we deal with other countries. The basic issue was the failure of a society to take seriously its role as a world leader. Greed, not a value for human dignity, shaped our country's decisions. King called for a major societal change. That is the man who became the hero.

Keeping the Dream Alive

As Christians, what is our role in keeping the noble dream alive? First, the celebration of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday must be a time of recommitment, not merely a time to have a day off from work and relax. The day should be used for education and introspection. It should be a time to reinforce King's principles with our young. This day should not be experienced in isolation. Rather, this day should be a part of a yearlong life-style commitment.

Second, we should make a commitment to continued personal growth. It is not acceptable for any of us to allow ourselves to be trapped by that which we already know. We must stretch our minds continually. No one person or group of people has a corner on the truth.

Third, we must recognize that we are not and cannot be in the struggle alone. Change will come through the work of many. Where do we work with others for change? Is that the best use of our resources? Are there other things which should be done?

Fourth, King was influenced by others and he influenced others. Whom are we role models? On Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday we should pay tribute to those who paved the way and to those who presently make a way.

Fifth, in the examination of our own lives, we must discern the places where we permit ourselves to be victimized and where we victimize others. How can we work in concert with others to change the situations where we witness oppression and other forms of injustice?

Sixth, and of greatest importance, we must take care to live our lives in a way that others will know that we are believers in the gospel. We are not all called to lead in the same way that King led, but we are called to strive to be God's people. We are called to do our part in the small things as well as the big things. We must stay strong in the struggle and keep our eyes on the work of the Lord.

Janice Jackson is a human relations coordinator for Milwaukee (Wisconsin) public schools. Jackson holds a master's degree in theology with a specialty in Black Catholic studies. She lectures across the country on education and social justice issues.

JANUARY

The Name of Jesus
Lutheran women pray, noon

Kaj Munk, martyr, remembered

The Epiphany of Our Lord

Lutheran women pray, noon

Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday
(observed January 16)

Lutheran women pray, noon

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
begins

Lutheran women pray, noon

Lydia, Dorcas, and Phoebe
remembered

Lutheran women pray, noon

PREVIEW

BEAUTY What does beauty have to do with spirituality and our Christian faith? More than we might imagine, says Carol Frances Jegen as she sets the theme for the February Lutheran Woman Today in the second article in her series on women and spirituality.

37 PELICANS Mary Lou Linder looks at the people who have brought grace into her life in "The Beauty of 37 Pelicans."

CHINESE CHRISTIAN ART The traditional Chinese folk art of paper cutting comes in for comment and display by Delbert Anderson as he shares paper cuts from Nanjing Theological Seminary.

**CALVARY/
AUSCHWITZ/
HOLY WEEK** A poignant reflection by Eleanor Mathews.

**NO DROUGHT
OF FAITH** Stories and faith statements of women who experienced last summer's drought.

PSALMS The Bible study "A Light to My Path" continues. Session 2, "Arise, O God," looks at Psalm 74.

*As a community of women
created in the image of God,
called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and
empowered by the Holy Spirit,*

*We commit ourselves to
grow in faith,
affirm our gifts,
support one another in our callings,
engage in ministry and action, and
promote healing and wholeness
in the church, the society,
and the world.*

**Purpose Statement,
Women of the ELCA**

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